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The most significant development in higher education in the last 20 years is the essentialist-existentialist confrontation--the formal versus the vital. What we decide about this matter will determine what we do with all other developments. Essentialists in education are concerned with what is permanent and rational and contend history is a worthy teacher. Existentialists center attention on man as man and consider the search for meanings crucial. They are concerned with present and personal relevance, with ambiguities, and seek to learn from the full range of human experiences. Their methodology is provisional but operational and their style often improvisational. Modes of learning today, though disputed, are influenced mainly by essentialists although they too are curious about innovations. Because they are in control, changes most likely to succeed are those that complement existing practices, are reached by consensus, and are suggested by tradition-conscious innovators. Thus the innovative process today is characterized by changes WITHIN rather than OF systems. Existentialists are more likely to favor curriculum variations that free the individual from the dominance of the institution, boredom of a speciality, and force him to face political and social questions. Because much current effort is piecemeal and shortsighted, we need inclusive innovators who have philosophical scope, perspective on options, and appreciation of the dynamics of change in complex organizations to generate inclusive innovations. (JS)

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INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

by

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INCLUSIVE INNOVATION

In this issue of the Reporter, *we offer a change of pace from the data-based features which have occupied this space in past issues. There are many pathways to the improvement of higher education, and Dr. Martin's philosophical discussion of the process of innovation is also representative of the Center's broad concern with higher education. This paper was presented as the keynote address for the conference on Climates of Learning and the Innovative Process recently sponsored by the Center and the Union for Research and Experimentation in Higher Education.*

The most significant development in higher education within the last 20 years is not the introduction of computer-assisted instruction, nor the expansion of federal funding and federal influence, nor the rise of institutional consortia, nor growth in numbers, facilities, and other things of this sort. The development of greatest consequence, I believe, has been in the realm of the mind and the spirit and has to do with ideas and personalities—it is the essentialist-existentialist confrontation. What we decide about this matter, which involves our basic assumptions and purposes, will determine what we do with all other developments.

Because this essentialist-existentialist confrontation in education is being duplicated in many realms of contemporary life, a field of endeavor reaching from academe to industry will be used to illustrate the issue that we face. The building housing Yale's School of Art and Architecture is the work of Paul Rudolph, an architect who has of late been challenging the *status quo* in his field. Opponents say that this example of environmental architecture doesn't work—rooms are too large or too small, not functional, and have an excess of gadgets, crannies, levels, and other eccentric surprises. Adhering to the values of an industrial age, they judge the building in terms of efficiency—"rentable footage per dollar invested" is the commercial expression of the point.

Advocates of Rudolph's work say that straight-arrow functionalism ignores the fact that art should stimulate the emotions as well as the mind. What a building does to a personality is more important than the way the building implements a person's work. Thus, "... Rudolph's involvement with technological function is always a secondary matter. His intuitive approach is based on ability to stir senses with his now-infinite and now-confining spaces (Jacobs, D., 1967)." Unpredictability, angularity, an emphasis on texture, color, and drama, even playfulness, these are the characteristics of a style which this architect has termed "the new freedom (Jacobs, D., 1967)."

The formal versus the vital—that is the issue at the heart of the essentialist-existentialist confrontation, whether the field of encounter be architecture or education. And this is the issue that we must understand.

Essentialists in education are formalists who reach back over time to the ancient Greeks—from Wittgenstein and Russell, Dewey and James, Hegel and Kant, Mill and Bentham, back through Locke, Descartes, Calvin, Aquinas, Augustine, to Aristotle and Plato—and behind them to "timeless" essences. Whether idealists, emphasizing ideas and forces that transcend the particulars of human existence, or realists, concentrating on men and affairs in and of this world, essentialists are concerned for that which goes beyond time and place—for that which is permanent, uniform, rational, sure. For some, the standard by which all else is judged is God, for others, nature or humanity, but never is it that solitary being—man.

The existentialists, on the other hand, center their attention on man as man. Buber, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus all see philosophy and education as efforts to give rational form to a vision that must be, finally, intensely personal. Only so can it be vital. And behind them are Kierkegaard, Pascal, Rousseau, Montaigne, Augustine (it is possible to have a foot in each camp), Tertullian, Socrates, and Job.

When Socrates acted as an intellectual gadfly to his fellow Athenians, asking questions that challenged assumptions, bidding citizens to determine individually what they believed, emphasizing the process of investigation more than the acquisition of knowledge, he was a forerunner of existentialism.

When Augustine spoke through the *City of God,* he showed himself to be a Neoplatonist bent on reconciling the world of men with that of God. But, when he revealed himself in the *Confessions,* personally, spirtually, he was then a man confronted by God, a human being who could tremble as well as testify.

Pascal looked at man during the ascendency of seventeenth century rationalism, yet he saw only a confused and confusing

creature; he looked to the heavens, at a time of confidence in natural law, and saw contradiction and ambiguity. That man existed in time, space, and history was certain, but what sort of being man was to become could be for Pascal only a matter of faith.

Kierkegaard's themes were the irrational in man, and yet man's primacy over all rational systems, and the threat of every system to each fumbling, erratic, imperfect man. They are existentialist concerns and existential problems yet. Today the system's essential component is technique—defined as "any complex of standardized means for attaining a predetermined result (Merton, R. K., 1965)." Technique unerringly achieving programmed results means, in education, that it is not the individual in and for himself who is being educated, but a person trained in and for the system. Thus, means become ends, and processes become absolutized. To absolutize an instrumentality is indeed the end, for it compels one to live on an endless treadmill.

The quest for meanings is crucial for existentialists. Some of them say that man creates all meanings. Sartre: "Man invents himself." Viktor Frankl represents another perspective in saying that existence is not invented by man, but rather detected (Frankl, V., 1963). Either way, the meanings make the message.

It did not take Marshall McLuhan to discover that media shape the messages they bring and, in fact, contribute thereto. Alfred North Whitehead and others made these points much earlier. McLuhan's unique "contribution" is in assigning certain characteristics that are now evident in the young—their interest in participation by aural, tactile, and kinetic experiences; their attraction to color, texture, and new experiential configurations that unite the full human sensorium—to the impact of the electronic media. This is the message he attributes to television and other mechanisms of the new electronic age. McLuhan is right, of course, about the radical changes in the tastes and values of the young. He is wrong, however, in thinking that these changes are due to particular media. McLuhan has spotted the effect but missed the cause. The "turned on" generation has not been flipped by an electric switch, but by a panexistential ethos that challenges youth to look within themselves, to feel things deeply, and to insist on meanings in life that are personal and vital.

Existentialism on campus is most evident among the young, yet beware of identifying the sides in the present struggle on the basis of superficial markings. This confrontation is not between gray flannel suits and beards, nor between people this side or that side of age 30. You cannot bag people like groceries.

Essentialists in education contend that there is a specific body of knowledge to be taught and learned, that human nature is the same in every epoch, that tradition, ceremony, history, and experience are worthy teachers. So, subject matter, standards, prerequisites, and sequences are essentialists' concerns. They also emphasize the disciplines and protect the departmental style of life.

Educational change, for most essentialists, is possible so long as continuity is not sacrificed to immediacy, so long as anomalies are not used to justify anarchy. They are not persuaded, however, that the present clamor for change bespeaks a bona fide crisis in education. They say with the English: "When it is not necessary to change, it is necessary not to change."

An essentialist extreme is illustrated by the annual deluge of books by academics that are, in the familiar word, "competent." Critical reviews begin, "This is a competent book," and end, "One wonders why he took the trouble to write it." Such works are faithfully accurate, well organized, in the proper style, and quite harmless—save for the cost to the writer and reader in energy, curiosity, zest, concern, and whatever else they brought to that literary encounter and lost there.

Essentialists are also likely to be conspicuous in making academic freedom a matter of conceptual entities—definitions, mechanisms for implementation, and penalties for violations. Existentialists, on the other hand, are more likely to see academic freedom as a relational condition obtaining among persons. But their lack of emphasis on form, in this connection or others, doesn't mean that freedom is any less important to them. Indeed, the existentialists' rallying cry is the "new freedom."

From the time of the sixteenth century, as William Barrett, Ernest Becker, and other writers are emphasizing, Western man has been moving out of the medieval matrix—that complex of church-state arrangements by which all of man's life was dignified and controlled—into a position of increasing autonomy. Now, stripped of his traditional consolations, man stands naked and alone, thrilled by his freedom but terrified, too. Absolute certainties are gone; only provisional certitudes remain. But these are enough, existentialists argue, if man can develop a tolerance for ambiguity. Indeed, it may be in this area that his strengths should be developed. The only advantage the human mind has over the computer is its ability to work with vague, ambiguous, even contradictory problems. In past centuries, to maintain human supremacy over the environment, man utilized his brains to unscramble complex issues. In the future, supremacy may depend on his ability to scramble things up again—making work for man that the computers cannot handle.

More seriously, existentialists are less concerned about continuity with the past than with present and personal relevance. For them, there is only a present of things past, a present of things present, and a present of things to come. And this continuum is judged by the free man of flesh and blood, creature of mind and spirit, the one with a unique capacity for self-awareness and sensitivity.

Andre Gide has claimed that the chief attraction of Montaigne is his willingness to examine himself and reveal himself openly. "In every historical period," Gide wrote,

> an attempt is made to cover over this real self with a conventional figure of humanity. Montaigne pushes aside this mask in order to get at what is essential; if he succeeds it is thanks to assiduous effort and singular perspicacity; it is by opposing convention, established beliefs, conformism, with a spirit of criticism that is constantly on the alert, easy and at the same time tense, playful, amused at everything, smiling, indulgent yet uncompromising, for its object is to know and not to moralize (Gide, A., 1964).

The new existentialism, panexistentialism, breaks with the dark mood of Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and other somber

representatives of the philosophy. The emphasis now is on the Montaigne manner and on the full range of human experiences from which meanings are derived—disorder and order, mystery and certitudes, frailty and aspiration, grief and joy. There is an interest, for example, in historical perspective but not in historicism. Existentialists agree with Gibbon that the study of the classics may have retarded rather than hastened the intellectual development of the West. Men used the past as a fixed model rather than a stimulus to model building. "The authority of the ancients, and of Aristotle in particular, drove culture into a rut and during the sixteenth century the University of Paris turned out almost nothing but bookworms and pedants (Gide, A., 1964)."

It is to avoid such a fate, without ignoring history, that existentialists emphasize that knowing and valuing are both facets of the learning process. Essentialist pedagogy has stressed the accumulative side, now existentialists stress the affective. It is a matter of offering, on the one hand, something to be learned, while on the other, it is an interest in how the learner takes the learning. So to existentialists, what is said in class by the professor becomes less important than what is heard by the student. The number of lectures given, the amount of material covered, and the procedures and arrangements employed are significant only to the extent that they help students find self-identity and develop a capacity for good judgment. This is the end to which knowledge is the means. The methodology of existentialists is provisional, but operational. Their style is often improvisational. But what they lose in efficiency, they hope to make up in vitality.

Because the essentialist-existentialist confrontation is the dominant feature in the present climate of learning, it is certain that innovations and the innovative process are being affected by it. An undeniable fact is that innovations are almost never decided on their merits (Miles, M., 1964). They are initiated, sustained, and finally terminated by considerations external to the proposal itself. This is why it is so important to view the process of innovation in the context of the prevailing situation. Only so can we determine what is possible and what is needed.

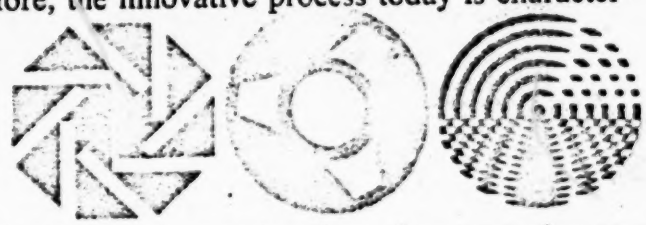
The climate of learning in the House of Intellect today is influenced mainly by the essentialists. They set the thermostat, but their efforts at climate control are being increasingly disrupted by existentialists who keep opening windows to let in fresh air. Teaching assistants and some assistant professors with vivid memories of stifling classrooms are especially active among these fresh air fiends. So are people in some areas of the humanities. Yet even there, and certainly in the other divisions of learning, the essentialists, although harassed, are still the masters of the house—albeit increasingly grumpy hosts.

Now, in these times of disquietude and testing, brought about largely by radical changes external to education—particularly the shift into a postindustrial, nuclear-electronic epoch—it is not surprising that there is a broad-based interest in innovation. With the essentialists, it is largely directed toward new means to traditional ends, while existentialists are more likely to be interested in new means to new ends. But with both there is curiosity about innovations.

However, since the essentialists are in control, we may predict that the following types of change have the best prospect for success: First, those changes that show good innovation-system congruence—defined as how well the innovation fits in with existing institutional practices. Complementarity, not confrontation, is the rule. To be different without being special is the goal. This is the kind of change essentialists can support.

A second thing that may be said about the changes most likely to succeed, given the control of essentialists, is that they will be soft-shoe innovations. Not all of the essentials for essentialists have to do with underlying values or organizational overlay. An innovator may succeed as much by good manners as by brilliant ideas—if he is a "good fellow," with a courteous, patient, generous, predictable personality or has "good credentials," a Ph.D. bestowed by one in a coterie of elect schools and not only publications, nor even professional writings, but research publications featuring "hard" data. Moreover, if we have assurance that "he has an appreciation for the realities," that is, a tolerance for the static; and agrees to "live within prescribed means"—abide by the pinched vision of an atrophied brain-trust—even though, as McGeorge Bundy recently said, excessive caution may be bad management; and if, in sum, our innovator is a "team man," a committee type who blends into the woodwork or wallpaper—either straight grain or flower pattern, depending on the setting—then we may free him to experiment. And we need not fear the results.

Structural congruence in innovations and personal compatability for innovators are requirements essentialists impose on change to assure that tradition will control experimentation. And they want this not because they are weak or habit-bound but because their values dictate such control. Values determine standards, and by such standards all changes are judged. Therefore, the innovative process today is characterized by changes within systems rather than of systems, changes reached by consensus and implemented with a minimum of tension and risk, changes that sustain the *status quo* by conforming to prevailing values.



Where will the members of the "loyal opposition," the existentialists, apply their power? What sort of innovations will they support? Existentialists, given their values, may be expected to favor curriculum variations that show promise of freeing the individual from the dominance of the institution—independent study, the use of nonintellective variables in the selection of students and the evaluation of their work, and the community concept of academic governance. They are likely to favor proposals that break open the conventional packaging of knowledge. The times, they think, call for new learning configurations. The students stand to benefit by an alternate problem-theme approach, and the faculties need the stimuli of new assignments.

Professors in increasing numbers are bored. They teach in a perfunctory fashion, not because they don't know any better but because they aren't motivated enough to do better. Their boredom is the expression of the human psyche's compensation for the fatigue that comes to those who are caught between competing loyalties. Faculty commissioned to teach also have been conditioned to seek satisfaction through tighter and tighter specialization. Such specialized subject matter can be taught to an undergraduate but at the sacrifice of comprehension by the student, if the job is done

at a level of sophistication sufficient to sustain the professor's interest. The options for faculty are, too often, exclusive association with like-minded specialists or boredom with the unmindful students. Existentialists press for problem-theme, transdisciplinary courses or, at least, for crossdisciplinary courses. Such programs are seen as more flexible for students and as valuable in bringing faculty out to the borders of their disciplines where boredom gives way before the challenges of a new relationship. Existentialists are, in addition, responsive to those ideas that propel the free individual into social and political situations where man is pitted against the machine or the Establishment.

Proposals from existentialists are likely to be more radical in content and less predictable in style than those of the essentialists. Not only is their vitality hard to encapsulate, even as individuality is difficult to routinize, but existentialists often allow their antipathy toward organizations to encourage ignorance thereof. They may not know enough about institutional grids to realize how change might properly be effected. And to their ignorance they couple impatience—a most dangerous union, one likely to produce a bastard who becomes hysterical because he thinks that he has no legitimate connection with the past, or a messianic, who thinks that the salvation of the world rests with him alone.

What we need in American higher education now, given this situation, are innovators who think inclusively about the prospects for inclusive innovations. Thinking inclusively requires sufficient philosophical scope to see that the present climate of learning is influenced by the essentialist-existentialist confrontation, to appraise the strengths and weaknesses of both sides, and to enlist the skills of both to attain desired goals.

Secondly, to think inclusively is to see things from the other person's side without forgetting one's own perspective. To those who say that there is no reason to change, that there is nothing new under the sun, that human nature is the same forever, and that the old ways are the best ways, the inclusive innovator points out the need for other models by emphasizing the radical nature of the world into which we are moving. It is a world antithetical to the atomization the old technology produced, in which education was patterned after the industrial production line: a school was a "plant," students, "products," and learning, "training." The youth in this changing society are a new breed of cat, in a different jungle, and there is some trailblazing to be done.

Then there are people who claim that change is impossible. Many in the radical left feel a sense of futility now. The Establishment is, they say, corrupt but resilient; it has devised ways to envelope criticism, absorb its impact without being affected, and go on as before.

Many educators share this pessimism toward the prospects for change, especially for educational institutions. The inclusive innovator, however, while aware of the problems, is not willing to concede that bureaucratic systems always block innovation or that hoary tradition frustrates all change. Changes do occur. In 1215 A.D., the Papal legate in Paris forbade teachers to lecture on Aristotle's works; in 1231, Pope Gregory IX appointed a commission to expurgate him; by 1260, Aristotle had become *de rigueur* in every European university, and ecclesiastical councils penalized deviations from his views. This about-face for the church, that most conservative institution, occurred in just 50 years. Speaking of that length of time, the domination of graduate programs and subject matter specializations in our colleges and universities, perhaps the only institutions whose conservatism rivals that of the church, dates back only to 1876 and the founding of Johns Hopkins. From that beginning, followed profound changes for all of education. But it doesn't always take 50 years. The nation's spasm over Sputnik in 1957 produced innovations in math, science, and language instruction. The multiversities have come into prominence within the last decade, as have faculties. They enjoy salaries and benefits that put them among the social elite, while residual power in the nation-state shifts over to them as they become state's men. Or, if education is impervious to change, what about the convulsion that Berkeley has undergone since 1964? In three years, the students there have achieved changes, as, in a few months, has a new governor. Contrary to the popular notion, colleges and universities, like other institutions, are vulnerable to pressure, responsive to leadership, and in the process of important changes.

The third component of inclusive thinking is an appreciation for the dynamics of change in complex organizations. As theorists on social change have shown, successful innovations usually depend on the following factors: an ideology that motivates and unifies; a viable social matrix showing certain features complementary with the innovation and others that challenge through contrast; strong leadership, called in the jargon, the change agent; also, effective carrying mechanisms by which the proposed change is advanced; and, finally, a provision for self-renewal and critical analysis because all efforts at change are subject to attrition or compromise over time and, therefore, must be constantly reaffirmed or updated.

While philosophical scope, perspective on options, and an appreciation for the way change can be structured in complex organizations are all necessary parts of thinking inclusively, the innovator we need today also must generate inclusive innovations.

If one axiom on innovations is that they are initiated from the outside, a second is that they are most often too little and too late. The usual procedure is to make a gesture and a bow suffice for a movement toward reform. We profess to be attracted to independent study, and so we arrange for perhaps one-fourth of the student's schedule to be set up accordingly. Yet we keep up the regular schedule and its pressure in the rest of the student's program—and then regret that he doesn't do better with independent study. How many faculty members with one-fourth of their term workload free for research, and three-fourths tightly scheduled, get much writing done?

So much of our innovative effort is just patching and pasting. Or, it is of limited vision and does not foresee the consequences. Partial, piece-meal innovation is, I suppose, better than none. It may open up a vision of possibilities. But it is quite evident that there is a paucity of radical change in higher education, at a time when the conviction grows that radical change is needed. That is why inclusive innovation is the kind that really matters now, and why we must find innovators with the courage and audacity to try it.

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